

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4069

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3607

AIDAC

E. O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: UNITED KINGDOM CONSUL GENERAL' S OBSERVATIONS ON
ECONOMIC SITUATION IN HANOI

SUMMARY: BRITISH CG HANOI EXPRESSES OPINION THAT THERE ARE NO
APPARENT FOOD SHORTAGES IN HANOI AND CONFIRMS THAT ON QUESTIONS
OF AID, DRV PREFERS TO DEAL ON BILATERAL BASIS ONLY. END SUMMARY.

1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR' S COCKTAIL PARTY MAY 10, 1973, IN HONOR UK-
INDOCHINA CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING VIENTIANE, GAVE USAID DIR/
ECONOMIC COUNSELOR OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WITH UK CONSUL GENERAL
IN HANOI, TIMOTHY EVERARD, HIS IMPRESSIONS OF ECONOMIC SITUATION
IN GENERAL AND FOOD SITUATION IN PARTICULAR IN NORTH VIETNAM.
EVERARD COMMENTED THAT HIS IMPRESSIONS ARE RESTRICTED TO HANOI
SINCE
HE HAS VERY LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE ITS METROPOLITAN
PERIMETER. HE SAID THAT:

A. THERE IS NO REAL FOOD SHORTAGE IN THE HANOI METROPOLITAN AREA
AND PEOPLE ARE WELL FED.

B. THERE EXISTS RATIONING OF VARIOUS STAPLES. DEPENDING ON WHAT
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SEGMENT OF SOCIETY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE BELONGS, THE LOWEST RICE RATIONING IS 13-1/2 KG PER PERSON PER MONTH OR 450 GRAMS PER DAY. THE MEAT RATION IS ONE KG PER PERSON PER MONTH, USUALLY PORK, WHICH IS NOT ALWAYS AVAILABLE. CHICKEN AND DUCK, AS WELL AS VEGETABLES AND EGGS, CAN BE BOUGHT ON DAILY MARKET. SUGAR IS NOT ALWAYS PURCHASABLE. POOR QUALITY COFFEE IS AVAILABLE.

C. THERE ARE ADEQUATE MEDICAL SUPPLIES ON HAND, MOSTLY FROM EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. THE MAYOR OF HANOI(THE UK DIPLOMATIC CONTACT), UPON BEING ADVISED THAT BRITISH VOLUNTARY RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS WOULD BE WILLING TO SUPPLY MEDICAL SUPPLIES, REPLIED, AFTER FOUR WEEKS DELAY, THAT NONE WERE REQUIRED.

D. NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE ACCEPTING ASSISTANCE ON A BILATERAL BASIS ONLY, PUTTING SUPPLIES THUS RECEIVED IN STORAGE FOR RELEASE ON THE MARKET WHEN MOST ADVANTAGEOUS AND NEEDED.

E. DURING RECENT VISIT OF GOJ SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL, MYAKE, HANOI RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC CORPS MADE EFFORTS TO CONTACT HIM. DIPS IN HANOI ALLEGE THAT, IN AGREEMENT WITH NVN, MYAKE KEPT HIMSELF ISOLATED. RUMOR IN HANOI IS THAT DRV OFFICIALS AND MYAKE WERE DISCUSSING THE MODERNIZATION AND EXTENSION OF THE HONGHAI OPEN PIT ANTHRACITE COAL MINES, AN ENTERPRISE IN WHICH THE JAPANESE HAVE LONG BEEN INTERESTED.

F. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS (JANUARY 27) THE NORTH VIETNAMESE VACILLATED ON COMMUNIST COUNTRY APPROACHES ABOUT REHABILITATING AND REPAIRING INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES. UPON SUSPENSION NVN/ US ECONOMIC TALKS, HOWEVER, THEY REQUESTED COMMUNIST

BRETHREN TO COMMENCE REHABILITATE AND REPAIR " THEIR" FACTORIES. CHINESE SUPPOSEDLY ARE BUSILY REHABILITATING NAM DIN TEXTILE COMPLEX AND RUMANIANS ARE CONSIDERING REPAIRING A CEMENT FACTORY. DEAN

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